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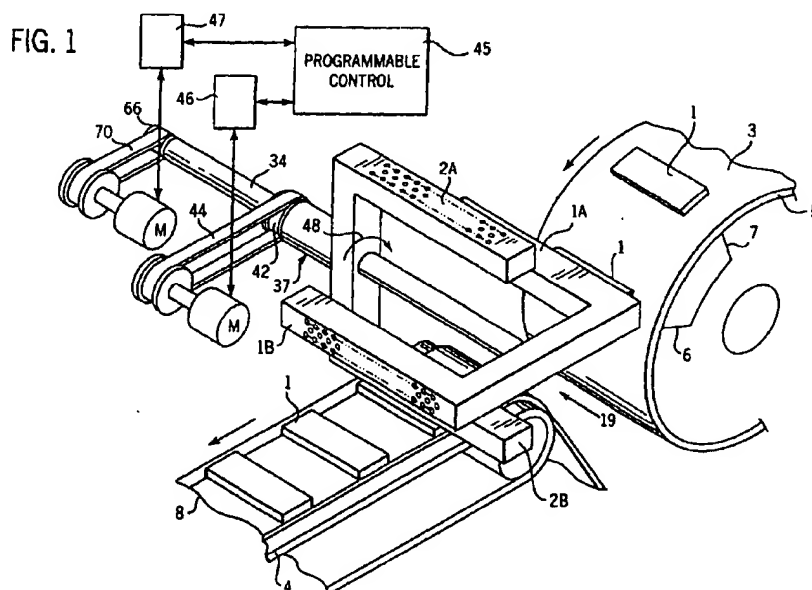
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**(54) Device for altering the spacing between conveyed articles**

(57) Articles being conveyed on a source conveyor belt with uniform spacing between them are deposited on a receiving conveyor belt with a different uniform spacing between them utilizing a device that has one or more transfer units mounted for being driven rotationally about a common axis, each transfer unit having axially extending article pickup members which all rotate or orbit in the same circular path for gripping successive articles being presented on the source conveyor and transferring the articles to the receiving conveyor. The

transfer units are driven rotationally with individual servomotors which are controlled to accelerate and decelerate cyclically such that the article pickup members arrive at the source conveyor or moving at the same linear speed as the source conveyor to pickup an article and arrive at the receiving conveyor moving linearly at the same speed as the receiving conveyor to deposit the article without relative motion between the pickup members and the conveyors while picking up and while depositing the articles.





European Patent  
Office

## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 97 30 3982

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	CH 678 616 A (SIG) 15 October 1991 * the whole document *	1,3,4,11	B65G47/84 B65G47/32 A61F13/15
Y		2,5-9	
A		10	
Y	WO 95 19752 A (KIMBERLY-CLARK CORP.) 27 July 1995 * page 7, line 7 - page 12, line 17: figures 1-5 *	2,5-9	
A		10	
A,D	US 4 726 876 A (J.E. TOMSOVIC JR.) 23 February 1988 * column 9, line 9-36; figure 1 *	2	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			B65G A61F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 22 June 1998	Examiner Grentzius, W
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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